

I 1
16. A method of loading containers on a marine vessel comprising the steps of:
selecting a plurality of containers adapted to contain and protect freight in a marine environment, each container having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume;
loading freight into said inner volume;
providing a vehicle including a body portion and a gripping portion including a spreader attachment, said gripping portion being capable of being raised and lowered, rotated, and inclined relative to said body portion;
individually lifting and transporting each container by means of said vehicle over a ramp to a storage deck of a marine vessel, said ramp and storage deck having sufficient strength to support said vehicle when said vehicle is transporting a fully loaded one of said containers;
positioning each container at desired locations on said deck by means of said vehicle for transportation by said marine vessel; and
securing said container to said deck at said locations.

I 2
22. A method of offloading containers from a marine vessel comprising the steps of:
selecting a plurality of containers adapted to contain and protect freight in a marine environment located on a deck of a marine vessel, each container having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume and having freight loaded therein;
providing a vehicle including a body portion and a gripping portion including a spreader attachment, said gripping portion being capable of being raised and lowered, rotated, and inclined relative to said body portion;
individually lifting and transporting each container by means of said vehicle over a ramp from a storage deck of a marine vessel, said ramp and storage deck having sufficient strength to support said vehicle when said vehicle is transporting a fully loaded one of said containers;
placing each container at desired locations on an associated dock by said vehicle.

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25. A method of transporting containers with a marine vessel comprising the steps of:

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selecting a plurality of containers adapted to contain and protect freight in a marine environment, each container having a set of outer walls defining an inner volume and having freight loaded therein;

providing a vehicle including a body portion and a gripping portion including a spreader attachment, said gripping portion being capable of being raised and lowered, rotated, and inclined relative to said body portion;

lifting a container by means of said vehicle;

causing said vehicle to travel over a ramp to or from a storage deck of a marine vessel, said ramp and storage deck having sufficient strength to support said vehicle when said vehicle is transporting a fully loaded one of said containers;

positioning said container at a desired location on a support surface or dock by means of said vehicle; and

repeating said lifting, causing and positioning steps for each of said plurality of containers.

Cancel claims 1-15, 24, 41, 45 and 49 without prejudice.

Remarks

Claims 16, 22 and 25 have been amended, and claims 1-15, 24, 41, 45 and 49 have been canceled. Marked-up copies of the amended claims, illustrating the changes thereto, accompany this amendment. Review and reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-15, which are directed to a nonelected invention, have been canceled as requested in the Office action.

Claims 16-19, 21-35 and 37-40 are rejected as allegedly defining obvious subject matter over U.S. Pat. No. 4,325,667 to Freeman in light of U.S. Pat. No. 3,691,595 to Backteman et al. and U.S. Pat. No. 4,201,511 to Charles. Accordingly, independent claim 16 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 41, independent claim 22 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 45, and independent claim 25 has been amended to include the subject